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February 16, 2006 LB 855, 856, 873, 916

SENATOR KREMER: Close on the committee amendments?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Yes, you may.

SENATOR KREMER: Okay. Thank you. I'll again just review just a little bit. And I thank Senator Chambers for his discussion, too. And really, dealing with the bird flu, it is really a small piece of the puzzle, but I think it's one of the initial things that we can do in response if something should show up. And I'd like to also bring out that there is a lot of monitoring going on now with the university and Department of Agriculture, and what we did is expanded the ability for them to monitor the noncommercial flocks and also something other than just the breeding flocks. So LB 856 and LB 873 deals with the department able to monitor and have some surveillance on the poultry industry, and to be responsive and proactive in addressing the issues as they come up. LB 855 really is kind of along the same line when it allows the department to be aware of exotic animal auctions and swap meets so that they know what's going on for the same reasons, to some extent, that if some disease comes up, that they will know and be able to trace down where these animals have gone to and what they've been exposed to in order to respond. And LB 916 is also in the duties of the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Animal Industry, and it's talking about our mandatory price reporting. The committee hearing, there was all the commodity groups and the farm organizations testified in support. There was no dissenting votes on any of these four bills coming out of committee. They all felt like the mandatory price reporting is something that's been very helpful. It's caused that the industry to be very visible and not allow anybody to make some agreements or sales contracts that are not known to everybody else that we can all respond to. So I think it was something that we needed to respond to in case the federal act...the Congress does not reauthorize the mandatory price reporting, then that we have some response that we can be up and have our own state mandatory price reporting in progress without a delay. So again, each of the four bills had no dissenting votes out of committee and we had some very expertise witnesses, and I appreciate all the discussion this morning. So with that, I thank you and ask for a favorable vote on the committee amendments, as amended.